MCC Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes March 10, 2011 3:00-4:00

Present: Kathy Pollock, Tom Tisue, Tracy Lee, Jenny Klingenberg, Erin Hoffman, Pam Brown, Anne Meilof, Ed Breitenbach, Sherry Chandler

The committee was happy to hear of Pam Brown’s new role as Assessment Consultant for the committee. Some grant funds will be used to give Pam a stipend for helping the committee complete assessment projects, provide direction, and give support to the committee until August of 2011.

Jenny provided an update on the reports submitted by department chairs during faculty seminar days. The committee appreciated the departments who were able to submit reports. Overall, the committee thought this activity served to get departments and faculty thinking and talking about assessment issues. One good reminder that came up was to make sure that our future assessment efforts are useful and meaningful.

The committee discussed the information on the Assessment Academy of the HLC. In general, the Assessment Academy is an intensive program sponsored by the HLC to assist institutions to improve their assessment efforts. Institutions that want to be involved send a team of five members to the Assessment Academy events in Chicago twice a year over a 4-5 year period. These team members are then trained in assessment practices that are then brought back to the institution. The team comes up with assessment-related projects that will benefit the college. The cost for the Assessment Academy over four years is $21,000, but this figure does not include travel expenses, lodging, or meals. Some committee members were in favor of moving in this direction, thinking that if we went through this process, it would provide a strong incentive for the institution to produce a good assessment plan. Going through the Assessment Academy will also substitute for the required HLC progress report MCC needs to submit by 2013. In the last HLC self-study report, the HLC committee basically said our assessment program needs improvement. Some committee members were uncomfortable with the conflict of interest HLC has in this process of being our evaluator and training provider. No decision was reached on this topic, but the topic will be brought up again at a later meeting.

Next, the committee examined Assessment Committee Mission Statements from other colleges. Discussion involved whether MCC should have an Assessment Committee mission statement. The committee members liked this idea, and Pam was willing to put together a draft of a mission statement for the next meeting.

The committee was updated on developments with the Instructional Affairs Council (IAC). A draft of new wording was passed around for discussion / review. The draft language would put the Assessment Committee into the IAC Bylaws under Article V—Committees. The proposed language would basically make the Assessment Committee a standing committee of the IAC.
The other IAC update involved asking the IAC to form a subcommittee to review MCC’s General Education Abilities and suggest improvements. The main goal is to develop one list of worthwhile General Education outcomes that will better facilitate assessment.

Anne gave an update on a new assessment software package called WEAVE. This software was recommended by Pam who saw it working well at another college. Anne and Ed had participated in a demonstration of the software, and it helps faculty and others keep track of assessment data in a user-friendly manner. There was some discussion about WEAVE and how it could help to improve our assessment practices. The committee felt it would be helpful to schedule a demonstration for the full committee at some future date.

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 14 from 3:00-4:00 in room 207. The meeting after that will be on May 12, from 3:00-4:00 in room L 167.